

DEMOCRATIC GERMAN REPORT

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ONE DOWN: THOUSANDS TO GO

Theodor Oberlaender, West Germany's most prominent nazi politician, finally resigned his post of Minister for Refugees on May 4th, after the Supreme Court of the German Democratic Republic had sentenced him to life imprisonment for murder. (Details of the court case against Oberlaender on page 74.)

The forced resignation of Dr Oberlaender proved that the pressure of international public opinion, if intensively enough applied, could help to get the more blood-stained former nazis removed from high office in West Germany.

Two other members of Dr Adenauer's cabinet are known to have been members of the nazi party: Gerhard Schroeder, Minister of the Interior, who told the American magazine "Newsweek" on February 1st 1960 that he had joined the party and the storm troops because he knew

that this was the only way of making a career; and Hans Joachim von Merkat, who apart from being a party member helped to organise the nazi fifth column in Latin America. Another minister, Hans-Christoph Seeborn, Minister of Transport, was apparently clever enough never to take out nazi party membership, but helped to "Aryanise" industry in nazi-occupied countries, and has recently made public speeches blaming the Czechs for the outbreak of World War Two. Chancellor Adenauer's personal assistant, State Secretary Hans Globke, wrote the official legal commentary to the nazi racialist laws.

The proportion of old nazis and nazi supporters is even higher in other branches of the West German state. Every single commander in the West German Wehrmacht served Hitler, and a number of senior officers were sentenced as war criminals after

1945. The Bonn newspaper "Generalanzeiger" stated on January 9th 1960: "Most of the soldiers who are today older than 40 certainly regarded Hitler for many years as a great Fuehrer."

The West German Foreign Ministry has today a higher proportion of former nazi party members in senior posts at home and abroad than could be found in Ribbentrop's Foreign Ministry. The West German diplomat who has not got a nazi record is the rare exception.

The position in the West German courts is well known. At least 1100 West German judges and public prosecutors served in the nazi special courts and military courts, applying Hitler's terror laws and decrees. In all branches of the administration and industry the situation is similar.

One nazi has been sacked: there are thousands more to go.

SEE FARMS FOR YOURSELVES GDR Invitation to British M.P.s

British M.P.s should visit Democratic Germany to see for themselves how the cooperative farms had been formed and how they were working, the GDR Government stated on May 4th.

The invitation was issued after the British Foreign Office had taken the unusual step of "expressing sympathy for the victims of the recent campaign of forced collectivisation imposed by the East German authorities".

The official GDR reply stated

that it was understandable that Britain, with its completely different agricultural structure, should find it difficult to understand the development towards large-scale cooperative agriculture. For this reason the Government of the German Democratic Republic would be glad to give delegations from both Houses of Parliament every opportunity to see for themselves.

The critical British Foreign Office statement had followed

intensive urging from the West German Government, which is trying to whip up a pre-Summit propaganda campaign against the GDR.

The West German Government also prevailed upon the United States Government to issue a critical statement about farming in the GDR on April 29th. The Foreign Ministry of the GDR replied that the US statement was "gross interference in the domestic affairs of a sovereign state."

The Trial of Oberlaender (Part II)

Theodor Oberlaender, West German Minister, was sentenced in absentia to life imprisonment by the Supreme Court of the German Democratic Republic on April 29th. He was adjudged guilty of "repeated murder, repeated incitement to murder, continual participation in organisations aimed at crimes against people's lives, and continual incitement to crime". He will be arrested on sight if he enters Democratic Germany.

Here is some of the evidence cited by witnesses in the latter stages of the trial, which had begun on April 20th. (The first days of the trial were covered in the previous issue of GERMAN REPORT.)

Fritz Huebner, from Bernau in the GDR, told the court of his experiences as a member of a Luftwaffe construction unit in nazi-occupied Lvov in 1941. He had seen how 30 to 35 civilians had been forced to run a 50-yard

gauntlet of armed soldiers. Those who survived were thrown out the window of a fire tower. The witness saw Oberlaender among a group of 5 or 6 German officers commanding the massacre.

Another witness, a mechanic named Aleskerov from Baku in the Soviet Union, told the court about Oberlaender's activities in raising the quisling "Bergmann" Battalion of Caucasians in 1941. The witness, who had been captured by the nazis near Leningrad, described how Oberlaender had toured P.O.W. camps personally, selecting prisoners for his battalion. Sick and weak soldiers were shot or killed with injections, the witness reported.

The next witness was a man who had been one of Oberlaender's top aides in the Bergmann Battalion — a Georgian named Okropiridse who had recently completed a 12-year

sentence for joining the quisling troops. He described how Oberlaender had recruited troops for his battalion — he put them on starvation rations till they could hardly walk and then showed them prisoners who had joined the battalion feasting on extra rations.

Okropiridse also told how Oberlaender had led his retreat from the Caucasus: prisoners were shot, civilians driven away or sent as slave labourers to Germany, homes burnt.

Summing up, the prosecutor general explained that he was not demanding the death penalty for Oberlaender because he was not one of the top war criminals in the sense of the decisions made at the Nuremberg Trials. The life sentence was justified, he pointed out, because of Oberlaender's direct guilt in innumerable murders of Jews, Poles and Soviet citizens.

Anti-Semitic Bishop for Britain

Bishop Otto Dibelius is due to visit Britain over Whitsun. In connection with this visit GERMAN REPORT reprints excerpts from an article in the American news magazine TIME of February 8th 1960:

"The ugly taint of anti-Semitism fell last week on the Grand Old Man of German Protestantism — Otto Dibelius, Evangelical Bishop of Berlin and Brandenburg.

"It began with a front-page article in East Berlin's Communist paper 'Berliner Zeitung' ... It quoted at length from an article by Otto Dibelius in the weekly 'Friede und Freude' of April 9, 1933 — just 68 days after Hitler had come to power.

Wrote the then 52-year-old Dibelius: 'The government of the Reich has finally recognised the necessity to boycott Jewish businesses in the correct assumption that through the international connections of Jewry the hostile campaign in foreign countries will cease only when German Jewry is economically endangered ... But this is not the solution to the Jewish problem ... As soon as Jewish immigration is cut off, Jewry in Germany will retrogress. The number of children in Jewish families is small. The process of dying out will proceed surprisingly fast.'

"Five years before, charged the Communists, Dibelius had written: 'In spite of the ugly sound often

attached to the word, I have always regarded myself as an anti-Semite. The fact cannot be concealed that the Jews have played a leading part in all the symptoms of disintegration in modern civilisation.'

"Accustomed to Communist polemics against the staunchly anti-Communist bishop, Western newsmen went through the routine of checking with Dibelius' office. Instead of the heated denial the reporters expected, they were jolted by the reply that

the quotations were accurate. Embarrassed West German newspapers, which regard Dibelius as something of a hero, handled the story like fissionable material; the important 'Die Welt', for instance, ran the story on page 4 with no direct quotes ..."

(TIME had a considerable time-lag on this story. Documentary proof of the anti-Semitic record of Bishop Dibelius was first presented to the English-speaking world in GERMAN REPORT on March 27th 1953.)

GDR WARNS OF NAZI JUDGES

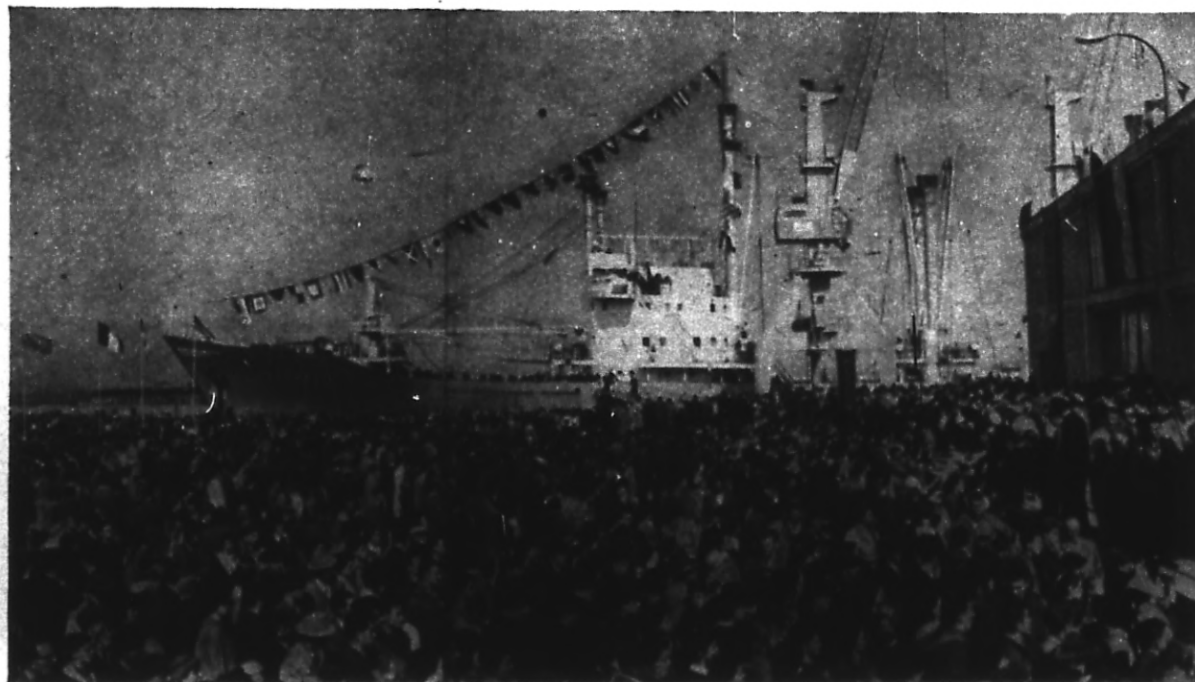
The Government of Democratic Germany sent to the UN on May 6th nazi documents proving that present-day West German judges had committed war crimes. In notes to the UN and the states of the wartime anti-Hitler coalition, the GDR pointed out that over 1000 judges and public prosecutors who had served in nazi Special Courts were working in West German courts today.

The GDR recalled that the members of the anti-Hitler coalition had agreed to punish all those guilty of war crimes, and other crimes against humanity. These principles had been repeated in the Potsdam Agreement and at the trials of the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, and they had been carried out in the German Democratic Republic.

The GDR had been publishing the facts on the nazi judges for years, but the West German Government had done nothing. On May 8th 1960 prosecutions for war crimes were due to cease in West Germany under the statute of limitations.

The GDR note pointed out that Law No. 10 of the Allied Control Council for Germany, dated December 20th 1945, specifically excepted war crimes from the statute of limitations. This would mean, the GDR note continued, that if the West German Government allows all prosecution for these crimes to come to an end then it is acting in violation of the decisions of the allies of the anti-Hitler coalition as well as the principles of the United Nations Charter.

New Port in Rostock Opened



The first part of Democratic Germany's new deep-sea harbour in Rostock was ceremoniously opened on April 30th, eight months ahead of schedule.

One of the best construction workers had been chosen to report officially to the 20,000 assembled Rostockers and visitors that the first long quay, with all its modern dock buildings and equipment, were completed. Then the captain of the "Schwerin" — first of the GDR's 10,000 ton freighter fleet to unload here — gave the signal for the big cranes to haul their first loads from the ship's hold, and all the vessels in the harbour blew their horns, day-light fireworks exploded and flags of all countries on the Baltic seacoast floated down from the sky.

Work on the new harbour began at the end of 1957, after it became clear that existing facilities could not cope with the GDR's growing trade and merchant fleet. Original plans foresaw opening the first quay in January 1961 and finishing the whole harbour by 1967, but enthusiastic efforts by all concerned with the project made the present opening date possible, and it is planned to finish the whole harbour, including separate sections for lumber and petroleum, by 1965.

One of the main reasons that construction is well ahead of schedule was the speed in building the long

breakwater. Necessary rocks were collected all over the country by children, youth, farmers and others and sent in unceasing rail shipments to Rostock. Of a total 72,000 tons of rocks used, 62,000 tons were collected in this way; thanks to this and other voluntary help, the breakwater was finished after nine instead of the projected 20 months.

Work is also under way already on a new trunkline railroad and modern highway which will connect Rostock with Berlin and industrial areas in the south of the GDR.

The need for the new harbour facilities is shown by facts on the

growth of Democratic Germany's merchant marine. In 1952 there was only one freighter; by the end of this year, there will be 52 merchant ships and by 1965 there will be 100, about half of them in the 10,000 ton class. There will also be three more big luxury liners to join the present "Voelkerfreundschaft" in trips to the Mediterranean for trade union members on holiday. These ships all require deep-sea harbour facilities. Rostock's new harbour will help increase trade, save valuta used to pay ports in West Germany and elsewhere and thus increase the GDR's living standard.

A Good Start in 1960

Industrial production in the GDR gained 12% in the first quarter of 1960 as compared with the same period of 1959. This meant that the same rate of increase was maintained as last year — an important achievement since in past years production in the first quarter has tended to lag.

In a large number of commodities, the plan figures were overfulfilled: in pig iron, which jumped from a production of 463,000 tons in January-March last year to 489,000 tons in the same period this year; in brown coal, cars, trucks, paper and many chemical products. There was a big jump in TV set production from

55,000 in 1959 (1st quarter) to 88,400 in 1960 in the same three months.

Refrigerator output also rose from 15,600 to 25,300, but failed to reach the goals which had been set. This was also true of a number of other products — sulphuric acid, phosphates, cellulose and worsted yarns.

Sales of consumer goods rose 5% over the winter months of 1959 — the rise was especially large for durable products like furniture, vehicles and radio and TV sets. By the end of March, the total of stores and restaurants with full or partial self-service had climbed to 14,200.

Book Review

W. Germany's "Power Elite"

"Germany Rejoins the Powers" by Karl Deutsch and Lewis Edinger. Stanford University Press. London: Oxford University Press. \$6.50.

This is the book of the year for anyone whose interest in West German affairs is so insatiable that he wants to know how many Christian Democratic members of the West German Parliament were born in the first decade of this century in Southern Germany of aristocratic Catholic parents. Its 300 pages are crammed with painstaking tables presenting rather marginal facts like this in an attempt to explain what makes West Germany tick.

But the book is of considerable value, nevertheless, for it does show that what the authors call the "power elite" of West Germany today is very little changed from the classes of society which ran the German state for the Kaiser, the Weimar Republic, and Hitler.

Anybody who might still think that West Germany is run by anti-nazis is in for a rude shock if he consults the 18-page table analysing the "Incumbents of German Foreign Policy Elite Positions" which starts on page 270 of the book, for instance.

This table presents in potted form the biographies of leading foreign ministry officials, the civil service heads, the military leaders, the party leaders, and heads of business associations and churches.

This biographical table has one column headed "Anti-nazi record", and with impressive regularity this column records "O", meaning that there is no record that the persons concerned had any sort of part in anti-nazi activity. In a very few cases there is the notation "Persec", and the authors of the book explain that the man concerned "reported minor persecution, such as dismissal from office, loss of job, police harassment, loss of pension, denial of promotion". In a few more cases is there the notation "Pris", which means that the man concerned was imprisoned by the nazis. In almost all cases this refers to short terms of imprisonment in 1944 after the failure of the anti-Hitler bomb plot, when the Gestapo rounded up almost at random practically anybody who might be thought to be opposed to Hitler.

I have taken the trouble of going through this list of the "German Foreign Policy Elite" to see what proportion of anti-nazis could be

found. The list included a number of Social Democratic, trade union and church leaders, many with good resistance records, but I left these out, since they have little direct influence on West German policy today. Here are the results:

The list names 168 persons as exerting a decisive influence on West German foreign policy. Four of them were "persecuted" (as noted above this meant such suffering as being denied promotion to a higher position in the nazi hierarchy); two were exiled; 16 were imprisoned, mostly for very short terms; and one man claims to have worked in the resistance movement (a nazi diplomat with a very bad record who got in touch with the American secret service late in the war). The remaining 145 worked for the nazis as generals, diplomats and high civil servants. It is a pretty damning listing, and deserves particular attention since it comes from a scholarly American volume which could certainly not be accused of any pro-communist tendencies.

A considerable part of this book is devoted to an analysis of public opinion polls in West Germany. We have only room for a few short extracts from these chapters:

"German politics today look remarkably sober, even pedestrian; no startling changes appear at all probable. Yet it is worth remembering that German political life presented a similar appearance during the heyday of the Weimar Republic between 1925 and 1929, only a few years before its collapse and the National Socialist seizure of power ...

"The consistent supporters of democracy seem to number about one-fourth of the adult population. On some issues this figure has declined to one-fifth or less. In a December 1952 poll, 21 per cent approved in theory of resistance against Hitler in wartime, but in an April 1956 poll only 18 per cent would name a new school after one of the leaders of the abortive 1944 plot against Hitler ...

"On the other side, there is a hard core of unreconstructed Nazis and a penumbra of their partial sympathisers ... In poll after poll between 7 per cent and 15 per cent said that they liked Hitler and Goebbels, professed race doctrines about Jews, and announced that they would welcome the return of a new National Socialist party to power ... In a June 1956 poll of both men and women 16 per cent of respondents in the eighteen

to twenty-nine age group declared they would welcome the efforts of a new Nazi party to come to power; and in July 1956 an equal proportion in a separate poll of young men declared without qualifications that National Socialism had been "a good idea".

"With somewhat less fervour, about one German in four was an emotional supporter of the Nazis or extreme Nationalists in general ... An equal number felt that Germany had lost the war mainly because of domestic sabotage and treason ... 24 per cent wished to bar from high government positions any man who took part in the wartime resistance against Hitler ...

"37 per cent said in April 1956 that it was 'better for Germany not to have any Jews within the country ... A majority rejected the notion of German war crimes. More than one-half (55 per cent) felt in 1953 that the German soldiers of World War II had nothing to reproach themselves for in their behaviour in the countries they had occupied."

"Germany Rejoins the Powers" is not a book for the bedside table (particularly at this price) but it might be worth seeing to it that your local library gets a copy.

Frederick Ford

News and Views About the GDR

You can hear news, music, discussions, the latest reports of sport events and other features on the German Democratic Republic by tuning in on the following wavelengths of Radio Berlin International:

Europe: 9730 kcs = 30.83 metres
7300 kcs = 41.10 metres
6616 kcs = 49.06 metres

The times of the programmes are as follows (all in GMT):

ENGLISH: 18:00, 20:00, 22:00, 23:00
FRENCH: 18:30, 20:30, 22:30
SWEDISH: 17:00, 19:30, 21:30
DANISH: 17:30, 19:00, 21:00

For the Near East, the programmes are on 9730 kcs = 30.83 metres or 11 765/6080 kcs = 25.49/49.34 metres (Arabic at 4:00, 11:00 and 17:00 (GMT), German at 6:00, 13:00 and 20:00 and English at 16:00 and 23:00 (GMT).

"NEWSWEEK" TAKES NOTICE

Arnaud de Borchgrave, a senior editor of the US news magazine "Newsweek" recently made an extensive tour of the German Democratic Republic, and on May 2nd his paper published his report. After a propaganda lead describing an alleged "wave of terror" connected with the collectivisation of farms in the Republic, Mr de Borchgrave got down to facts, and here is what he had to say:

Already, East Germany has outstripped Czechoslovakia to become the world's eighth biggest industrial nation (after the U.S., Russia, Britain, West Germany, France, Japan and China). Its "Wirtschaftswunder" is not to be compared with the miracle of West German recovery, but as I found in towns and villages throughout East Germany, it is much more impressive than most of us realize. A "wassersport" exhibit in East Berlin, for example, is currently featuring water skis, tents, picnic baskets, air cushions, \$250 motorcycles, \$100 three-seater canoes (including paddles), piped-in jazz — and people buying. About 500,000 TV sets have been sold throughout the country (compared with 3 million in more populous West Germany).

East Berlin's main exhibit, of course, is still the flashy Stalinalee — a propaganda street (as is West Berlin's Kurfürstendamm). But in the last twelve months, East Berlin has also built 12,000 worker's homes. West Berlin, by comparison, has built 20,000 — but West Berlin (population: 2.2 million) has more than twice as many inhabitants.

One hundred miles south of Berlin, the ancient city of Dresden (80 per cent destroyed at war's end) is now a forest of newly completed apartments. Their half-million inhabitants crowd the supermarkets and furniture and household-appliance stores (all state-owned), and spend Saturday nights watching their television sets or dancing cheek-to-cheek to Western music in stovepipe trousers and dresses as tight as Braunschweiger sausage skins. One hundred twenty miles north, in the port city of Rostock, Hans Ohm, prematurely gray-haired city planner, talked enthusiastically about the progress of his town and added with utter frankness: "At the beginning things were very tough. I think you know what I mean. But now we're really off the ground. Every month brings tangible progress of one kind or another."

I saw something of what he meant at the huge (5 square miles) Schwarze Pumpe development, soon to become



the largest soft-coal refining plant in the world. A 29-year-old economist rattled off the statistics: "Right now we're converting 15,000 tons of soft coal a day, but the plant is still under construction. By 1969 we will be turning out 36 million tons a year. Everything is fully automated."

In the workers' canteen I queued for my lunch and in exchange for 80 pfennigs was handed a large platter with two sausages, scrambled eggs, mashed potatoes, spinach. Light music interspersed with propaganda bulletins came over the loudspeakers but no one seemed to listen. A poster showed a frail and sick-looking Adenauer at a ship's helm and behind him the muscular arms of a worker about to take over. Translated, this is what the poster had to say: "Peaceful work is the best defense against atomic war."

Most of the workers, the majority skilled, were making 900 marks (\$225) a month; the engineers, up to 2,000. Political discussions were almost impossible, except with party agitators. But one did get the impression that no one particularly cared about politics and since life was now tolerable and getting better the regime was being given the benefit of the doubt.

"Why should I care about politics? What can I do to change things?" That was the workers' attitude.

Many industrial workers are also able to save something for the tomorrow they are always hoping for. In Magdeburg, for instance, the deputy mayor claimed that saving in his town now averages 4,000 marks (\$1,000) for every household each year. It used to be that the high rate of savings reflected a lack of consumer goods on which to spend one's money. But after ringing a dozen doorbells at random, I don't think this is now true.

In one apartment building, for instance, I found Kurt Kolling, a 34-year-old precision-tool worker in the optical industry who made 950 marks a month, or \$2,850 a year.

His wife, Brigitte, a 29-year-old kindergarten teacher, made \$1,200 a year. Combined income: 16,200 marks. Combined tax: 2,400. Net: 13,800 (\$3,450). Neither is a party member, but the husband said he belonged to the union. Their rent is a mere 50 marks (\$12.50) a month for living room, two bedrooms, bath, and kitchenette. Furniture, refrigerator, and TV set (\$325) had been bought on credit. The building's basement includes a gigantic washing machine which all the tenants share.

The couple's 8-year-old boy goes to school free, is given free books, and pays 50 pfennigs (12 cents) for his lunch. The family spent last year's vacation in the Tatra Mountains in Czechoslovakia. The charge: 10 marks (\$2.50) a day. Asked what he thought of the regime, the husband replied: "I am not interested in politics, but you can write that life is getting better all the time."

Obviously all the workers are not this well off. (The peasants, in particular, are much worse off.) But a growing number of East German city dwellers are finding that life is getting better all the time. As it does, it probably is safe to say that active opposition to the Communist regime is gradually diminishing in the East German towns... It seems likely that the Communists' most difficult years are behind them.

Giant Fibre Plant

Construction began on the first stage of a giant chemical factory for the production of synthetic fibres on May 8th. The plant, situated at Guben near the Polish border, will turn out 2000 tons of "Dederon" fibre by 1963, which is enough to make 100,000,000 ladies' stockings. The plant will employ 10,000 workers and engineers when completed, and will supply thousands of tons of synthetic silk and woollen fibres. 3000 new flats are being constructed for the future employees, some of whom are already being trained for their future jobs.

African Students Come to Leipzig

Dr Osarihere Eribo, a tall young Nigerian of 30 years, sat down with me in the little doctors' room in Station C, a part of the huge, century-old Charité Hospital in East Berlin where he worked. He had come there after receiving his medical diploma in Leipzig. After he is finished with this obligatory year as an interne, treating patients under the supervision of an experienced older doctor, he will return to his homeland in West Africa.

Dr Eribo came to the GDR to study early in 1951 — a somewhat remarkable decision considering that the GDR, founded only one and a half years previously, had barely begun to emerge from the very difficult post-war years.

"The reason was as follows," he said. "In late 1949, there was a big miners' strike in Nigeria — in Enugu. More than 20 miners were killed by the police during the strike, and as a sign of solidarity with our workers the Free German Trade Union Federation and the Free German Youth offered the Nigerian trade unions a chance to send students to the GDR. The unions formed a Scholarship Board which interviewed young people. Finally eleven successful applicants arrived in Leipzig in 1951. We were the very first students from foreign countries to come to the GDR to study.

"Some of us had finished secondary school, but the college requirements are naturally different here than in

Nigeria; none of us knew German, of course. So we all started at the Workers' and Peasants' Faculty at Leipzig. These faculties are actually to prepare young Germans without a secondary school education for college entrance; but it worked out well for us, too, and we knew both German and the GDR quite thoroughly after our three years there."

When the number of foreign students began to swell rapidly, a special institute was opened in Leipzig, where a one-year intensive course in German readies foreigners for future courses and fills in any gaps in their educational requirements. But back in 1951, everything was still in the experimental stage, as Dr Eribo pointed out.

Another experiment was the "helper" system. Every Nigerian was teamed up with a German student taking the same course. This made it possible to help out when language difficulties cropped up. Quicker mastery of German was implemented by this system in another way, too. It helped the Nigerian students overcome the natural tendency to stick together and talk in their native language during free time. Instead, a mixed atmosphere of German and Nigerian students emerged, which was friendly and useful for both sides.

"After the first few years, we did not need 'helpers' anymore, but some of the friendships we made have lasted for nine years already; a group of four of us, my 'helper' and two other German friends, stuck together till we

graduated last December. I was a regular guest at the home of one of the fellows who lived near Leipzig — they even tried to learn some Nigerian recipes to make me feel more at home."

The 'helper' system is still in use, and it has helped several thousand students over the hurdles of German conjugations and GDR customs and ways of life.

"After our three years at the Workers' and Peasants' Faculty," Dr Eribo continued, "our Nigerian group split up. Four of us — including the only girl in the group — studied medicine. One each studied history, philosophy, agriculture and pharmacy and three went down to the Institute of Technology in Dresden to study engineering or electrotechnology.

"And now we eleven are all finishing our studies. Since we began nine years ago, however, other Nigerians have come, and also students from Ghana, Togo, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Cameroun, Kenya, Madagascar, the Mali Federation and one fellow from Liberia who came here from France on a bicycle. Then there are Egyptians and Sudanese and, of course, a large number of Algerians. As for the other continents, more and more people kept coming from all the socialist countries — from Albania to Viet Nam — from the Arab countries, Southeast Asia, Latin America and also western Europe.

"But, as I said, we were the first. Many things have changed since the early days, but some have always remained the same. All foreign students get stipends for as long as they study. These have varied somewhat in amount, but except at the very beginning they have always been between 250 and 300 marks every month. Since the student hostels only cost 10 marks a month rent, and since three meals a day cost us 65 marks a month, you can see that we have never had financial difficulties. Medical insurance is free for all students, too, of course. During our first years here the Free German Trade Union Federation also sent us off for holidays every summer free — they have always treated us like favourite sons — but after a while so many other students came from all over the world that it would have been a little unfair to the others if we took advantage of their kindness any longer, so we voluntarily gave up the free trips. Since holiday trips are very inexpensive here anyway — only 30 marks for two weeks — that was not a terrible sacrifice. We were also able

CALLING ALL TEACHERS

German-language teachers wishing to polish up on new idioms or grammatical intricacies and history teachers who want to probe deeper into German questions are invited to visit the GDR this summer.

As in past years, the Erfurt Pedagogical Institute will hold courses for visiting teachers. Included will be many interesting excursions — to a children's holiday camp, a cooperative farm, a nationally-owned factory, to the historic cities of Weimar and Dresden, and to the Buchenwald Memorial. There will also be discussions with German colleagues and experts.

Three courses will deal with German linguistics and literature and one is on history and current problems. A working knowledge of German is required for all four courses. They last from July 30th till August 19th, including the dates of arrival and departure. The fee for each course (including board, lodging and other expenses) is \$50 (US) or the equivalent in other currencies.

All enquiries should be addressed to:

Dr. Schuffenhauer
Pädagogisches Institut Erfurt
Erfurt
Nordhaeuser Strasse 63
German Democratic Republic

to visit some of the World Youth Festivals, by the way.

Since reports of discrimination and the ostracizing of African and Asian students in West Germany had been increasing lately, I asked Dr Eribo about the way he had been treated here by the people or groups and organisations he had come in contact with.

"I myself have never had difficulties or troubles of any kind", he said, "but it would not be true to say that there have never been incidents of any kind. After all, twelve years of fascism cannot be eradicated completely from some people's heads even in ten or twenty years. One of us medical students from Nigeria was told by a doctor not to enter a hospital maternity ward for fear of 'disturbing' the patients. He did not understand what the doctor had said, and went in anyway, but the German students with him heard it and complained about this discrimination. Soon the Nigerian was asked into the office of the university prorector. Here he was offered an official apology by the university and the assurance that such an incident would never occur again. I believe they decided only to reprimand the doctor involved at the time; it is interesting to note that he later 'fled' to West Germany.

"There were one or two other minor cases — the university and other authorities stepped in immediately to help us — and to try to clear up the heads of those needing it, with sharp reprimands and explanations. This is certainly a completely different picture from West Germany or many other western countries.

"But from the very beginning we were welcomed everywhere, really. People came to hear us speak when we lectured about Nigeria; they asked questions, they wanted to talk with us and find out about life in West Africa, and they wanted to show us how welcome we were.

"We saw the students most of all, of course, and we always got along very well with them. Our group also sang and danced to Nigerian folk music, and that made a hit at all amateur talent programmes.

"In general, we have always felt at ease. Here in Berlin, African and Asian students who are at schools in West Berlin usually come over here to East Berlin in their free time, because they feel more at home here, and there is no question of being snubbed or treated in an unfriendly way.

"Yes, we have always been treated warmly and as equals everywhere we

went," Dr Eribo concluded. "We will miss the GDR after our years here, but naturally we are very eager to return to Nigeria, especially now that we will get our independence in October. There is lots for a doctor to

do there. What we have learned will be of the greatest value at home, and we are glad we started off the movement of foreign students coming to the GDR — it will help everyone concerned."

Elbe Meeting Commemorated

Several thousand residents of the little town of Torgau in the GDR spited wind and rain on April 25th to commemorate the famous "meeting at the Elbe". That was the historic occasion, exactly 15 years before, when American and Soviet troops had met for the first time on the banks of the Elbe River, just prior to the final victory over nazism.

Honoured guests at the ceremonies included ex-GI Joseph Polowski, head of the organisation of American veterans of the Elbe event, and Soviet

Colonel Bassistov, a representative of the Soviet troops.

In his speech to the memorial meeting, the mayor of Torgau reminded of the joint Soviet-American pledge made in 1945 to do everything possible to destroy fascism and militarism in Germany.

Mr Polowski, who has been active in working for international friendship ever since 1945, said that good will would make it possible to solve even the most difficult world problems.

GDR Group to Yugoslavia

A delegation from the People's Chamber of Democratic Germany arrived in Yugoslavia on April 25th and spent ten days visiting factories and farm areas in many parts of the country and meeting political leaders.

The GDR delegation was led by Dr Johannes Dieckmann, President of the People's Chamber, and included representatives of the five political parties and four organisations which have seats in the Chamber.

Among the subjects which the delegation studied were the Yugoslav electoral system, parliamentary methods, the nationality question and the system of workers' self-administration.

At a reception held in Belgrade, Dr Dieckmann said, "We have never made a secret of the fact that we do not always have the same opinions. But far more important today are the things which join us, and about which we have no differences of opinion: our common efforts ... to save, and guarantee peace ... to restrain reborn militarism in the western part of my German homeland ... and to remove the dangers to peace caused by the abnormal West Berlin situation."

Peter Stambolic, President of the Yugoslav Parliament, said that the people of Yugoslavia had suffered the crimes of German fascism at first

hand and that they saw in the members of the People's Chamber delegation representatives of those forces which had fought against fascism.

Polio Drops

All children and youth of Democratic Germany, from 2 months to 20 years old, have been immunised against poliomyelitis (infantile paralysis) in a series of swift campaigns. Each city or district was covered completely in a period of three days — East Berlin, for example, from May 2nd to 4th. The vaccine used is not injected but swallowed in the form of two drops of fluid.

The life-saving fluid was developed originally by the American doctor Albert B. Sabin and then tried out on a mass scale in the Soviet Union and other countries.

Children were given the drops in their schools or kindergartens, students at their university clinics, and other children were visited at their homes during the three-day drive. The speed of the campaign was necessary to guarantee that the vaccine was in perfect condition.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

What is the "free world"? Bright lights and prostitutes apparently, according to a West Berliner interviewed on the BBC Third Programme a few weeks ago. You may find this hard to believe, so here is the relevant quotation, from "The Listener" of March 17th. The speaker is describing returning to West Berlin from East Berlin:

"You catch the next train West, and you somehow have a feeling of immense relief when you cross the frontier again with the neon lights, the street hawkers selling the latest edition of an evening newspaper, and a couple of ladies of the town pacing round the entrance of a juke box dive. You are home again."

There was, if possible, an even odder quote from an obviously anti-Communist East Berliner interviewed on the same programme.

Here is what he said:

"The real problem rests with my son's ideological training (in an East Berlin school). Recently he returned home all excited about the last lesson in biology. The teacher had told them that according to the theories of Darwin and Engels human beings descend direct from apes. Though I contradicted him, he was not to be convinced... I was in a real quandary. Should I have told him that all he learns at a Communist school is liable to be propaganda and therefore false?"

To my disappointment, the gentleman interviewed did not go on to explain that he himself was still convinced that babies are found under gooseberry bushes.

Taken to Task

A reader in Britain has taken me to task for neglecting the personal angle in this Notebook recently, and using it instead for political stories which could have gone just as well on other pages of the paper. I plead slightly guilty to the charge, and herewith resolve to try to do better in future. The only explanation I can give is that nothing particularly notebook-worthy seems to have happened to me lately. I could, of course, write about the running battle with the plumbers, linoleum-layers, curtain-installers, and so on involved in moving into a new flat, which is what I have been devoting a lot of time and energy to lately, but this seems to be one of those things where there is not all that much difference between living in a capitalist society

and a socialist one, so there would not be much interesting or new to say.

"Threepenny Opera"

But since the reader who criticised the lack of the personal touch also wanted to hear about the theatre in East Berlin, perhaps I should have a shot at this. It happens to be a good week for this, since a few days ago the "Berliner Ensemble", Bertolt Brecht's world-famous theatre in East Berlin, finally got around to its long-awaited presentation of the "Threepenny Opera", Brecht's best-known play, though not his best.

Most readers probably today know the theme song of the play, "Mack the Knife", which became a hit-song in the western world a few years ago, but I should perhaps say just a few words about the "Threepenny Opera", since it has never been adequately staged in Britain. Brecht wrote the play, with music by Kurt Weill, in 1928, basing himself very freely on the old English "Beggars' Opera" of Gay. It is a vastly entertaining play about thieves and crooks, but like all of Brecht's plays it has a moral, summed up by hero-villain Mack the Knife as he is led to the gallows: "The man who breaks into a bank is not as big a criminal as the man who founds a bank."

When the play was first presented in pre-Hitler Berlin in 1928 it created a sensation, and the form of the play and its staging had a lasting effect on the European theatre. For years people have been urging the Berliner Ensemble, which today occupies the Schiffbauerdamm Theatre in which the "Threepenny Opera" was originally given in 1928, to put the play on again.

It was a challenging task, triumphantly accomplished. Erich Engel, the

man responsible for the original 1928 production, directed the new production too, and at the premiere performance which I attended the audience refused to go home for nearly half an hour after the final curtain had fallen, calling the actors, the director, the set designer and everybody else concerned with the production out in front of the curtain.

Nearly all the older members of the audience with whom I spoke in the interval claimed to have been at the original first night of the play in 1928: at a rough guess about 10,000 people in Berlin recall in retrospect attending that historic first night, though the theatre only holds about 700 people. To put as many people as possible in a position to make similar claims about the first night of the re-run, there were no fewer than four "premieres".

All in all, it looks as though the Berliner Ensemble now has another record-breaker on its hands. "Mother Courage", Brecht's wonderful anti-war play, has been on the repertory steadily for twelve years now, and "The Threepenny Opera" should be good for a long, long run. "Until the turn of the century, I suppose", one member of the company commented to me.

Anti-German?

Mr Sebastian Haffner, West Berlin correspondent of the London Sunday newspaper "Observer", has been making a mark for himself for some time now by very odd reports from Berlin for his newspaper. A few weeks ago he tried to launch the idea that it might be a good idea to revive Prussia: on May 1st he came out with this astonishing statement:

"It is not inconceivable that the anti-German excesses of the Ulbricht regime (which, for example, celebrates the day of German unconditional surrender as one of its two national holidays) might perpetuate... the opposite political passions."

It really takes some very crooked thinking to describe as an "anti-German excess" the fact that the German Democratic Republic celebrates as "Liberation Day" May 8th, the date upon which the German people were liberated from nazism. Since Mr Haffner was himself a refugee from nazism one would really have expected him to look back with some favour upon the overthrow of Hitler.

Democratic

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